

Site: M: 26/10/42

Sonner House

205 West Montgomery Avenue

Built: ca. 1920

Private

Jane Bradley erected this two-story, nine room, brick home with classical detailing about 1920. A large frame boarding house owned by her mother Rebecca T. Veirs had occupied this site from 1883. Mrs. Veirs' many investments in the land in the west end and her erection of several speculative houses greatly influenced the growth and development of what is now the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common The Sonner House

### 2. Location

street &amp; number 205 West Montgomery

   not for publication

city, town Rockville

   vicinity of

congressional district 8

state Maryland

county Montgomery

### 3. Classification

## Category

   district☒ building(s)   structure   site   object

## Ownership

   public☒ private   both

## Public Acquisition

   in process   being considered☒ not applicable

## Status

☒ occupied   unoccupied   work in progress

## Accessible

   yes: restricted   yes: unrestricted☒ no

## Present Use

   agriculture   commercial   educational   entertainment   government   industrial   military   museum   park☒ private residence   religious   scientific   transportation   other:

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Andrew and Sandra Sonner

street &amp; number 205 West Montgomery Avenue

telephone no.:

city, town Rockville

state and zip code

Maryland 20850

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery Co. Land Records 3371

liber

street &amp; number Montgomery Co. Courthouse 459

folio

city, town Rockville

state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title National Register of Historic Places 1974

date City of Rockville Historic District 1974 ☒ federal    state    county ☒ local

depository for survey records City of Rockville

city, town Rockville

state

Maryland

## 7. Description

Survey No. <sup>M</sup>26/10/42

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Sonner house faces south on West Montgomery Avenue near the intersection of Great Falls Road. It is surrounded by dense, mature hardwood trees and shrubbery. A row of large pines are set on the rear property line. A driveway stretches along the western edge of the lot for access to a two-car garage at the northwestern corner. There is a large brick hipped-roof garage at the far northwestern corner.

Constructed in 1920, this house is an example of Colonial Revival domestic architecture popular at that time. The clean, symmetrical facades, Doric columns for porch supports, and front fanlight doorway are typical characteristics of this style.

This 2-and-1/2-story, center-hall house is constructed in red brick laid in a common bond. It has a hipped roof covered in slate. Each facade, save the rear, has a hipped-roof dormer. Most of the windows on the house are six-over-six with wooden louvered shutters; the dormers have double multi-light casement windows. Vertically placed bricks form a lintel above each window. There is one exterior chimney.

The three-bay south (front) facade has a symmetrical arrangement of paired, six-over-six windows in the first and third bays on both stories. The center bay has a one-story portico with hipped roof supported on two Doric columns. The porch's brick foundation extends to the western edge of the house. The central exterior door is surrounded with multi-light sidelights and an overhead fanlight. On the second story is a smaller six-over-six window; the south facade dormer is centered above.

The three-bay west facade is asymmetrically arranged, with a one-story porch supported with Doric columns at the southwest corner. An exterior chimney rises through the porch and separates the second and third bays. A multi-light exterior door opens to the porch. Paired windows are in the first bay of the first story; single windows are in each bay of the second.

The north facade has a two-story screened porch at the northeast corner. The first story porch opens to the rear yard. There are two remaining bays on this facade, with an even fenestration showing single windows in each bay.

The east facade has three bays with two windows on the second story, first and third bays and an even first-story fenestration.

### Garage

At the rear, northwestern corner of the property is a two-car, common bond, brick garage. It has a hipped roof with asphalt shingles. Vertical three-light windows are centered on each facade of the garage. Overall, the garage complements the house in design and placement.

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## 8. Significance

Survey No. M 26/10/42

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				local history

1st 1883-1919/20 2nd ca. 1920

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

### Significance

This brick Colonial Revival residence is the second structure on this lot, both built by members of the Veirs family. Jane Bradley's demolition and replacement of her mother's 35 year-old boarding house reflects the changing housing patterns and growth of Rockville from summer resort village to urban county seat. The house remains in original condition and is the home of the present State's Attorney for Montgomery County.

### History and Support

During the last two decades of the 19th century, Mrs. R.T. Veirs speculated and invested in the development of the west end of Rockville. Her numerous property holdings and sales are well documented by the rapid succession of notices and advertisements appearing in the local papers of the period. Her first purchase was of this property, two lots of Margaret Beall's newly divided estate, 1/ on which she constructed two houses. One was a small Victorian cottage for rental, the other a large and comfortable frame boarding house with detached kitchen building. 2/

Mrs. Veirs attempted to sell her boarding house in 1887 and 1888 to raise money for her other ventures, including the development of her own subdivision, "R.T. Veirs' Addition to Rockville". 3/ She was unable to sell the boarding house and finally mortgaged both West Montgomery Avenue properties. As a result of the financial panic in 1893 she lost the rental cottage to foreclosure. In 1898 Mrs. Veirs owned 13 lots on which 6 large houses were located, including her own residence at Commerce and Adams Streets. (Site #26/10/19.) 4/ By 1901 only the subject property remained in her name on the Tax Assessments; the other had been lost to mortgage foreclosures in 1899 and 1900.

Continued on attachment 8.1

Jane Veirs Cromwell was the widow of Stephen Cromwell and had one son. Her remarriage in 1904 to wealthy Henry Bradley of Potomac caused quite a stir in the community. Jane and Henry Bradley purchased a home farther west in the same block as the boarding house (227 West Montgomery Avenue, Site #26/10/30). Jane's new wealth allowed her to buy up the mortgages on her mother's boarding house. At Henry Bradley's death in 1911 when it was found that he had willed everything to his wife of seven years, the other Bradley heirs sued to have the Will overturned. The case dragged on for three years, eventually reaching the Court of Appeals, but was finally decided in favor of Jane. 5/

Rebecca Veirs was by then in her 80s and living in Washington but the boarding house was still a going concern, as evidenced by an advertisement of May, 1914: "Mrs. John Maddox has rented the spacious boarding house of Rebecca Veirs, prepared to accommodate boarders with excellent table and sleeping arrangements". When Rebecca died in 1919, Jane inherited the boarding house. She razed the old L-shaped structure with its full-width verandah and constructed this nine room brick residence in the more fashionable "period style" with classical detailing, modern bathrooms, steam heat and two-car garage. 6/ Jane Veirs Cromwell Bradley devised the house to her son, Rockville attorney Stephen Cromwell, and the Cromwells lived here from 1946 to 1963. In 1965 the house was purchased by Andrew and Sandra Sonner; Mr. Sonner is the current State's Attorney for Montgomery County.

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Footnotes:

1. Lots 3 & 4 of Division of Margaret Beall's land, according to 1875 survey (now missing), Montgomery County Land Records EBP 29/258.
2. Montgomery County Sentinel, June 13, 1883, "Mrs. Rebecca Veirs is planning to erect a large boarding house in the west section of Rockville on a recently purchased lot." The other house is at 203 West Montgomery Avenue, Wagman House, Site #26/10/29.
3. Advertisements in both 1887 and 1888 for sale of the boarding house noted that it was constructed for that purpose and was located in an oak grove.
4. These lots include five on Block 1 of West End Park, three houses at Adams and Commerce Streets and three lots and a house in Rockville Heights.
5. Montgomery County Sentinel, various dates 1911-1914. Aug. 29, 1913 issue commented that 100 witnesses were listed. In July 3, 1914 issue the award to Jane Bradley was given as 3/4 of the estate valued at \$80,000.
6. Footprint of old structure appears on 1908 Sanborn Real Estate Map. New building is described at Inventory of Jane Bradley at Will Records, Inventory Liber OWR 9/201 (1946).

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. <sup>H</sup>26/10/42

Montgomery County Will, Tax, and Land Records; Plats and Atlases: Sanborn Map 1908, Deets and Maddox 1917, Montgomery County Historical Society Plats 22 and 22M ; Montgomery County Sentinel newspapers; Veirs & Bradley family histories.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .25 acres

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting NorthingB 

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Zone Easting NorthingC 

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D 

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E 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot #4 of Margaret Beall's Subdivision of 1875; fronting on West Montgomery Avenue for 45 feet by depth of 258 feet.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Anne W. Cissel / Dwayne Jones, Architectural Description		
organization	Peerless Rockville	date	August 1985
street & number	P.O. Box 4262	telephone	762-0096
city or town	Rockville	state	Maryland 20850

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
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